

**BEFORE THE TENNESSEE REGULATORY AUTHORITY**  
**NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE**

**June 16, 2003**

**IN RE:**

**PETITION FOR EXPEDITED REVIEW OF  
CENTRAL OFFICE CODE DENIALS BY THE  
NUMBER POOLING ADMINISTRATION  
RELATING TO WILLIAMSON MEDICAL CENTER**

**DOCKET NO.  
03-00343**

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**ORDER APPROVING PETITION FOR  
EXPEDITED REVIEW OF CENTRAL OFFICE CODE DENIAL  
AND REVERSING CENTRAL OFFICE CODE DENIAL**

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This matter came before Director Deborah Taylor Tate, Director Pat Miller and Director Ron Jones of the Tennessee Regulatory Authority (the "Authority"), the voting panel assigned to this docket, at a regularly scheduled Authority Conference held on June 2, 2003 for consideration of the *Petition for Expedited Review of Central Office Code Denials by the Number Pooling Administration Relating to Williamson Medical Center* filed by US LEC of Tennessee, Inc. ("US LEC") on May 14, 2003.<sup>1</sup>

**BACKGROUND**

In March of 2000, the Federal Communications Commission ("FCC"), recognizing "the near-crisis" caused by the exhaustion of telephone numbers in certain expanding geographic areas, initiated a policy designed "to slow down the rate at which central office

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<sup>1</sup> US LEC initially filed a Petition in this docket on April 17, 2003, but filed a corrected petition on April 24, 2003.

codes (or NXXs) in those areas are assigned to carriers.”<sup>2</sup> Among other things, the FCC adopted a mandatory utilization data reporting requirement, a uniform set of categories of numbers for which carriers must report their utilization, and a utilization threshold framework to increase carrier accountability and provide incentives to use numbers efficiently.<sup>3</sup> Under this policy, carriers seeking additional numbering resources must apply to the North American Numbering Plan Administration (“NANPA”) “or another entity or entities, as designated by the Commission” for a decision as to whether to allocate the numbers.<sup>4</sup>

On June 18, 2001, the FCC designated NeuStar, Inc. (“NeuStar”) as the national thousands-block number Pooling Administrator.<sup>5</sup> NeuStar, which was also serving as the NANPA, currently administers thousands-block number pools by assigning, managing, forecasting, reporting, and processing data that will allow service providers in areas designated for thousands-block number pooling to receive telephone numbers in blocks of 1,000. On March 14, 2002, thousands-block number pooling was implemented in the 615 NPA, which includes the Franklin Rate Center, the Central Office servicing Williamson Medical Center (“WMC”). Since then, telecommunications services providers participating in number pooling in that area are required to submit their requests for additional numbering resources to the Pooling Administrator.

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<sup>2</sup> *In the Matter of Numbering Resource Optimization*, CC Docket No. 99-200 (*Report and Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rule Making*) 15 FCC Rcd. 7574, 2000 WL 339808, ¶¶ 2, 183, 191 (March 31, 2000) (hereinafter “*First Report and Order*”); see also 47 U.S.C. § 251(e)(1) (directing the FCC to “create or designate one or more impartial entities to administer telecommunications numbering and to make such numbers available on an equitable basis.”).

<sup>3</sup> See *id.*, ¶¶ 40-41, 84, 97-98.

<sup>4</sup> See 47 C.F.R. § 52.15(a); see also *First Report and Order*, ¶¶ 143-48 (providing background on the development of the pooling administrator).

<sup>5</sup> *In the Matter of Numbering Resource Optimization*, CC Docket No. 99-200 (*Third Report and Order and Second Order on Reconsideration*) 17 FCC Rcd. 252, 2001 WL 1658101, ¶ 11 (Dec. 28, 2001) (hereinafter “*Third Report and Order*”); see also 47 C.F.R. § 52.15(a).

On April 28, 2003, US LEC submitted an application to the Pooling Administrator to obtain numbering resources sufficient to satisfy the demands of its customer, WMC, for a growth code in the 615 NPA area code. WMC sought 2,000 sequential numbers in the 615 area code, citing its need to support a network upgrade to its telecommunications system. WMC maintains that having numbered resources within one telephone prefix will reduce customer and vender confusion. US LEC applied to the Pooling Administrator because US LEC did not have sufficient numbers within its inventory in the Franklin Rate Center to satisfy the request. The Pooling Administrator denied US LEC's request on the ground that US LEC had not met the utilization threshold required in the Central Office Code Guidelines.

On May 14, 2003, US LEC filed with the Authority its *Petition for Expedited Review of Central Office Code Denial*. US LEC asserts that its inability to supply WMC, a large business customer, with the requested numbers within the same NXX code prevents US LEC from providing the quality of service its customer expects. US LEC further argues that providing the requested numbering resources would not materially impact the exhaustion of available numbers in the 615 area code. US LEC requests that the Authority reverse the Pooling Administrator's denial of its application and order the release of numbering resources to meet WMC's needs.

#### **FINDINGS OF FACT AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW**

Review by the TRA of the Pooling Administrator's denial of US LEC's application is authorized by the FCC.<sup>6</sup> According to the FCC,

We agree with the commenting parties that a safety valve mechanism should be established, and we delegate authority to state commissions to hear claims that a safety valve should be applied when the NANPA or

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<sup>6</sup> *Third Report and Order*, ¶ 61; see also 47 C.F.R. § 54.15(g)(3)(iv).

Pooling Administrator denies a specific request for numbering resources. State commissions should only apply a safety valve mechanism as a last resort and, to the extent possible, use it as a stop gap measure to enable carriers in need of additional numbering resources to continue to serve their customers. We adopt one specific safety valve to address the numbering resource requirements of carriers experiencing rapid growth in a given rate area. We also clarify that states may grant requests by carriers that receive a specific customer request for numbering resources that exceeds their available inventory. Finally, we give states some flexibility to direct the NANPA or Pooling Administrator to assign additional numbering resources to carriers that have demonstrated a verifiable need for additional numbering resources outside of these specifically enumerated instances.<sup>7</sup>

State commissions conducting this review must act consistently with the FCC's policy of facilitating fair and efficient numbering administration in the United States and ensuring that numbering resources are available to all telecommunications service providers on a fair and equitable basis.<sup>8</sup>

At a regularly scheduled Authority Conference held on June 2, 2003, the voting panel assigned to this docket considered US LEC's *Petition for Expedited Review of Central Office Code Denial*. During deliberations, the Directors were informed that US LEC's request had been investigated and US LEC did not have sufficient numbers under the same telephone number prefix to satisfy WMC's request. After consideration of the record, the public interest and this agency's responsibility to foster competition in the telecommunications industry,<sup>9</sup> the panel voted unanimously to approve US LEC's request

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<sup>7</sup> *Third Report and Order*, ¶ 61.

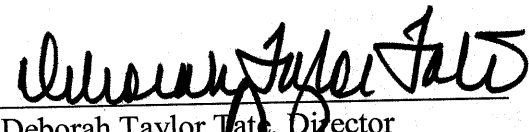
<sup>8</sup> See, e.g., *In the Matter of Numbering Resource Optimization*, CC Docket No. 99-200 (*Order*) 16 F.C.C.R. 15,842, 2001 WL 964979, ¶ 8 (Aug. 24, 2001) ("[T]he state commissions, to the extent that they act under the authority delegated herein, must ensure that numbers are made available on an equitable basis; that numbering resources are made available on an efficient and timely basis; that whatever policies the state commissions institute with regard to numbering administration not unduly favor or disfavor any particular telecommunications industry segment or group of telecommunications consumers; and that the state commissions not unduly favor one telecommunications technology over another."); see *FCC Announces GSA Approval of North American Numbering Council Through October 4, 2003*, CC Docket No. 92-237 (*Public Notice*), 16 F.C.C.R. 18,502, 2001 WL 1222428 (Oct. 15, 2001).

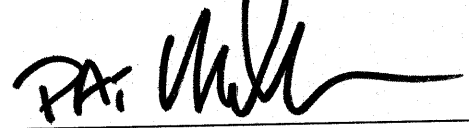
<sup>9</sup> See Tenn. Code Ann. § 65-4-123.

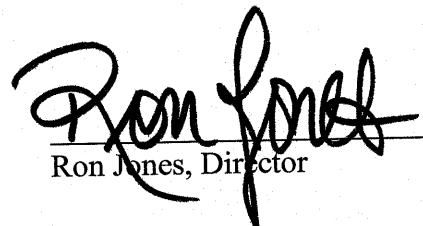
for expedited review and reverse the Pooling Administrator's denial of US LEC's request for additional numbering resources, specifically for the assignment of two one-thousand-blocks, from the same NXX for the Franklin Rate Center, Switch/POI designation BRWDTNDDDS0.

**IT IS THEREFORE ORDERED THAT:**

1. The *Petition for Expedited Review of Central Office Code Denial* filed by US LEC Telecommunications, Inc. is granted.
2. The Pooling Administrator's decision to deny US LEC's request for additional numbering resources is reversed as stated herein.

  
Deborah Taylor Tate, Director

  
Pat Miller, Director

  
Ron Jones, Director